

A VR MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

Directed by Ariela Bergman

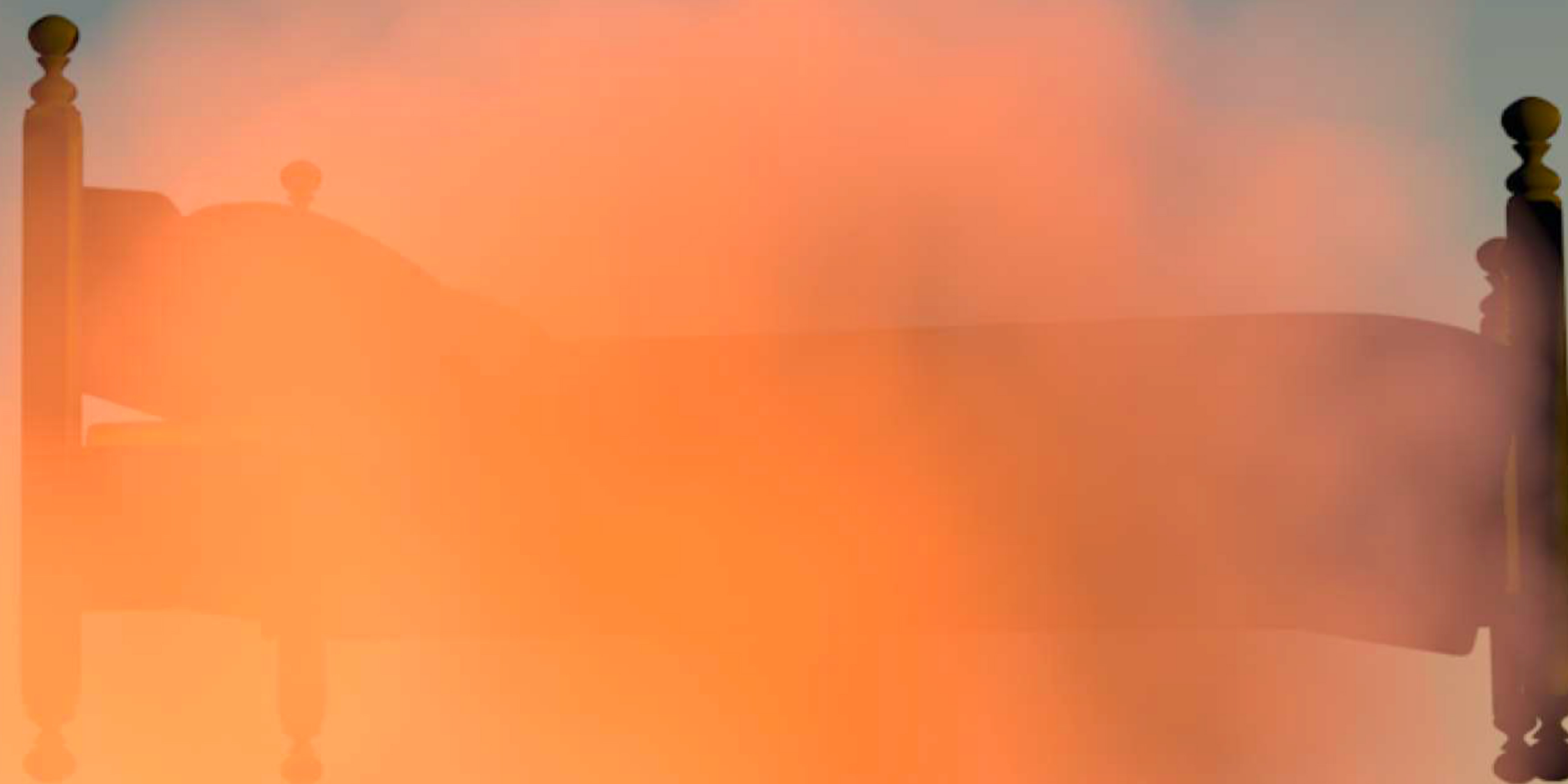
# Does the sun shine in Argentina?



The dreams & nightmares of Aunt Cristina



This immersive musical biopic tells the story of aunt Cristina, who emigrated to find herself but whose letters reveal she never managed to overcome her past.





## The Project

This project consists of an immersive musical biopic based on the eighty-one letters my aunt penned to my mother and grandmother from abroad between 1968 and 1993. The graduation part will be a smaller version of the whole project, allowing me to continue investigating before I jump into production. This will take the shape of a 5 minute prototype containing two scenes.

## Identification with the character

After my aunt Cristina's death, I got access to the letters that told the tale of her life. As a teenager she fled her homeland without her mother's consent, claiming to never have been understood by her own family. After an adventurous early life, she settled in France. But she never stopped writing and caring about her homeland. There is a tension bubbling within her writing. It becomes evident that despite her best efforts, she never felt acknowledged as the free, independent woman she believed herself to be.

The letters were beautiful and vulnerable as well as clumsy and awkward. I could identify with her pain and definitely with her awkwardness. They were related to the tragicomedy of existence that my whole artistic practice is based on. I had the impression of being in front of a fiction novel. And that is why I decided to tell her story by making songs, using her own words from the letters.

Paris

02/12/73

I want to make it clear  
that i do not hold  
resentment towards  
any single one of you  
I am leaving this town  
it has just drained me,  
I can't stand being here  
any second more"



## Implications of the Medium

Does the Sun Shine in Argentina? Is an immersive musical biopic. The songs will be constructed from excerpts of her letters, and I will be singing the lyrics to the songs myself.

In using 'the musical' as a genre I reference an idealistic world like the one Cristina created for herself. But Cristina was not alone in this. I am dialoguing with the self-narratives that billions of women adopted from Hollywood movies throughout the last century. I am using the musical as a nostalgic love letter to happy endings, or a farewell to them. This is a statement towards the construction of healthier new narratives in accordance with the present times.

VR is a young medium, a place to make new discoveries and investigate narratives. With the expected arrival of VR social media in the middle of the ecological collapse we are experiencing, this technology comes in the political agenda.

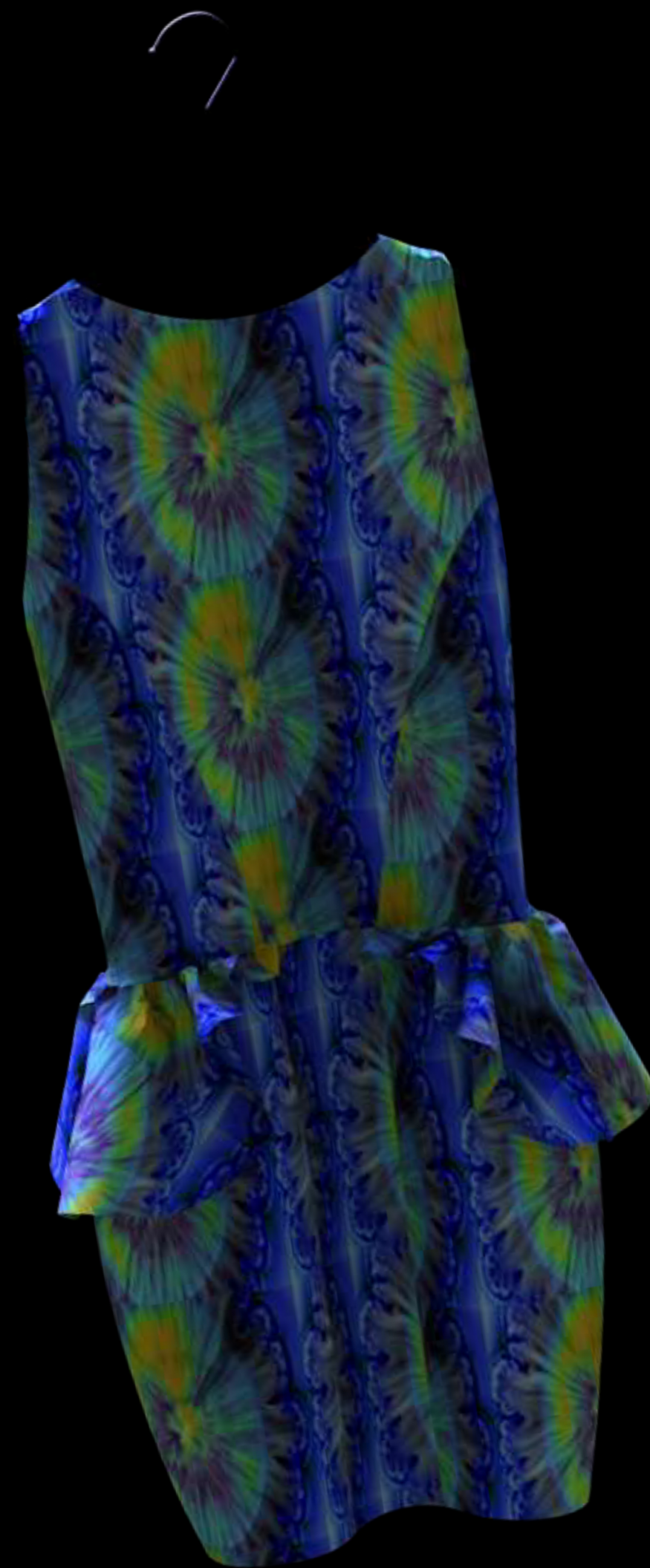
In this context, I am using VR technology to discuss and discuss escapism. Definitely not to perpetuate it.

Through VR, there is an inherent disembodiment, a ghostly projection of things that are not actually there. This absence/ presence dilemma connects with the emotional state of migration that my aunt seems to have experienced throughout her life, the permanent desire of belonging while actually inhabiting a liminal space.

I am telling the story of a woman who found reality too painful to face directly at it. She was looking for freedom and expansion but was ultimately trapped in her past and social context.

I am going to use VR technology to allow the audience to feel a contrast between vastness and claustrophobia in their own bodies.

Cristina, as a result of a difficult childhood, was as an adult still longing to occupy the center of the universe, and a VR immersion translates this state metaphorically, since the audience can take a central role in the space and narration.

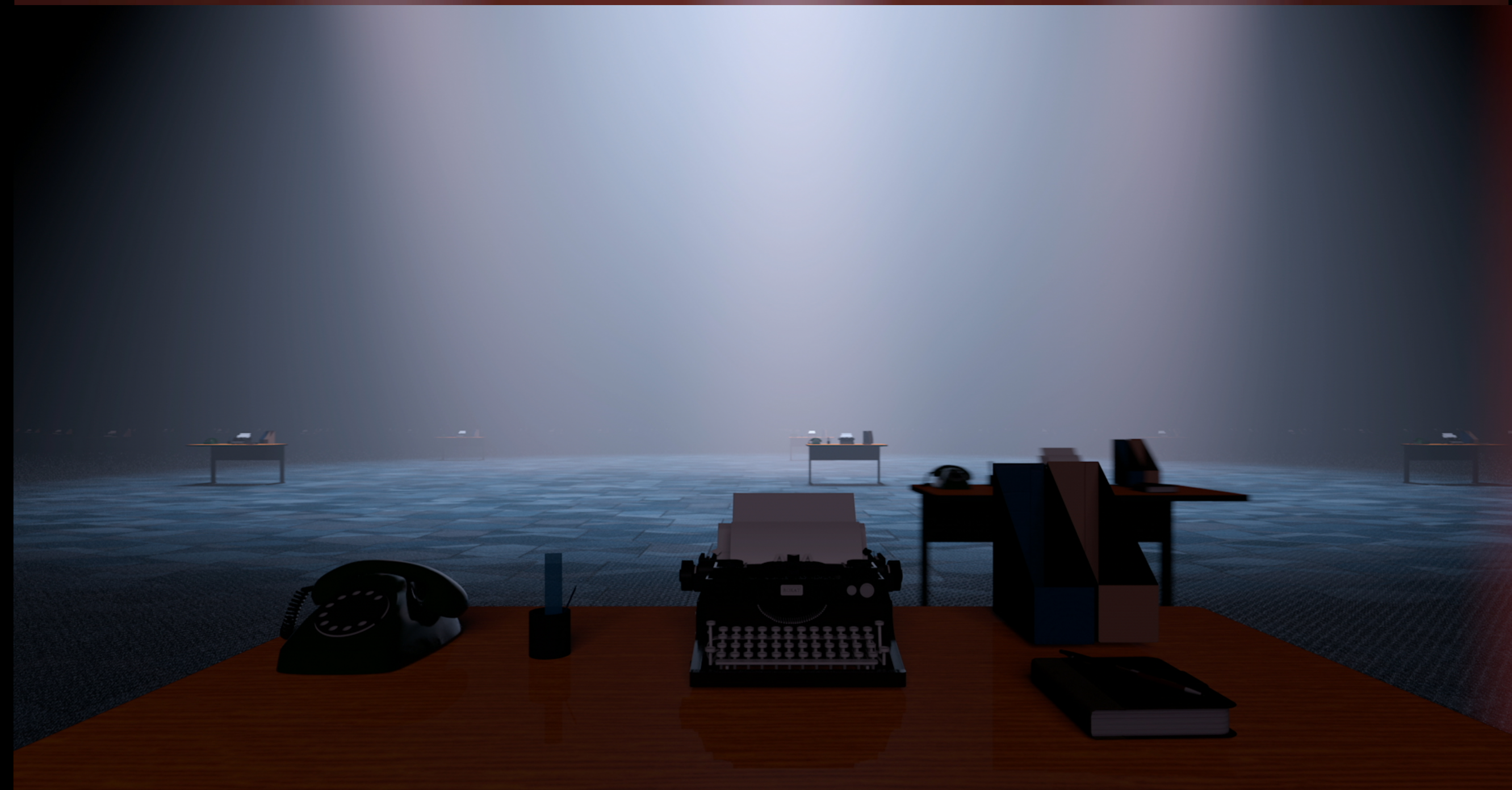




## The actual experience

In this work, I will create surrealist spaces inspired by elements found in the letters. The audience will undergo a subjective trip through Cristina's mental realm, as if they were looking from the character's eyes, experiencing a speculative version of her own dreams and nightmares.

With the use of VR headsets, the viewer will experience an immersive video divided into scenes constructed in CGI. Each space corresponds to a different letter: a teenager's room in which walls turn into a pink sky, snow falling in the middle of colorful mountains, a gigantic wig/creature hanging from a ceiling, a Palais de Versailles interior room that grows fungus in front of the audience.



Both the musical and visual production will correspond to the design trends from the different decades and countries from which the letters were sent. The journey begins in the late 1960s, with an enthusiastic eighteen-year-old Cristina and follows her to the early 90s with a disappointed middle-aged divorcee planning her possible repatriation to Argentina.



## Timeline

I have been working with a producer since June 2021, who has so far helped me understand the project better and find ways to present it in a manner that can be better understood.

At the moment, November 2021 I have a first version of the script of the whole project, I am acquiring 3d animation skills and I am applying them in the constructions of potential scenes.

I am making the very first tryouts in 360 stereo renders.

I am working with musicians in the composition of songs, of which we have achieved three.

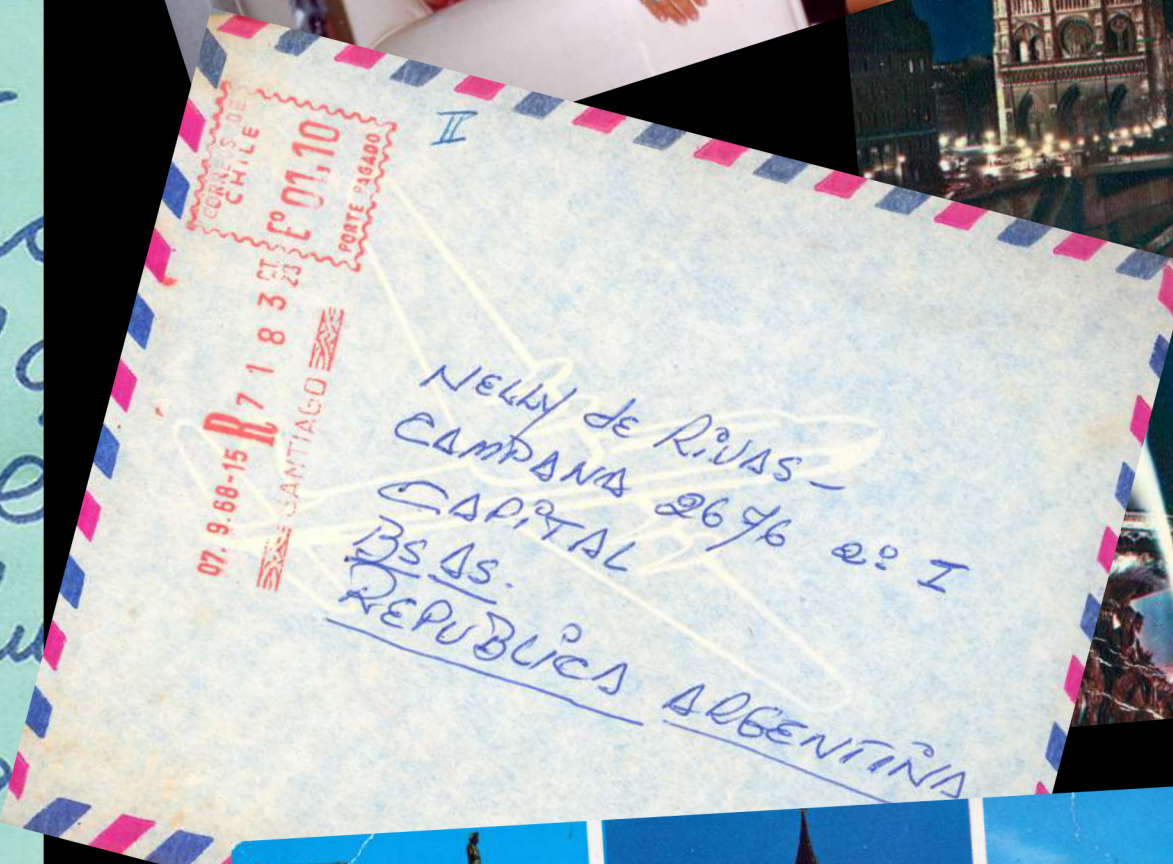
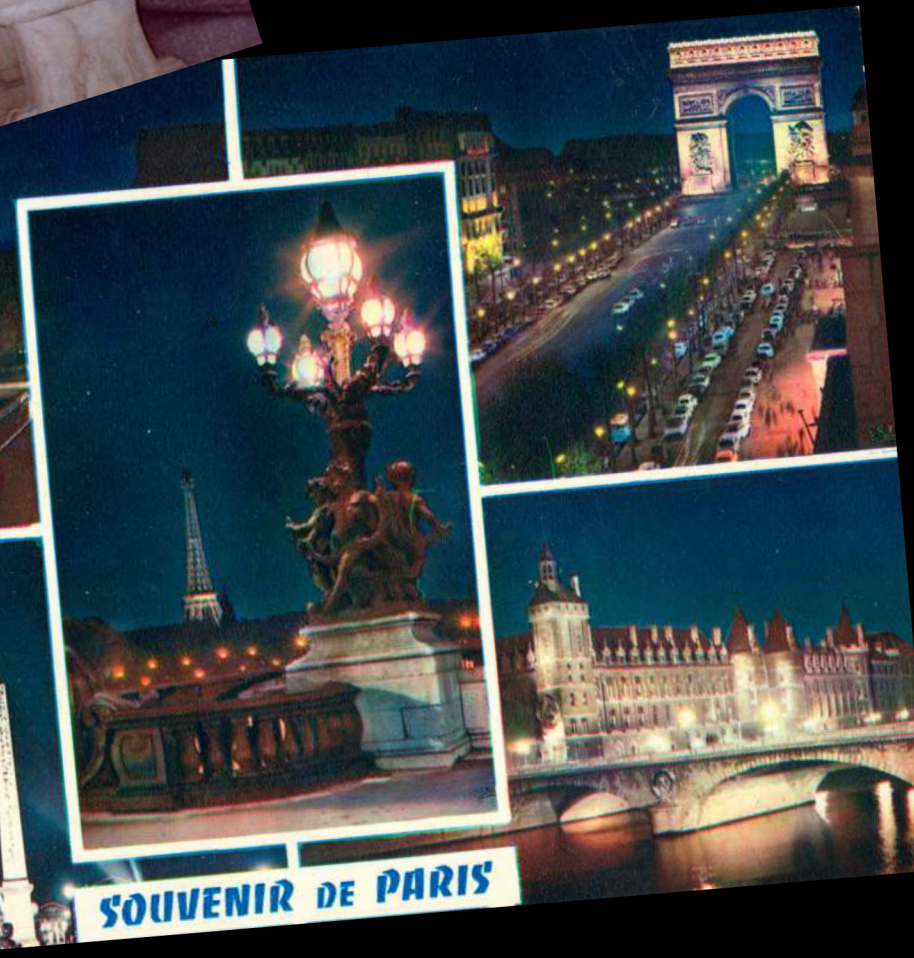
This month I will be pitching the project in the IDFA DOCLAB FORUM, and hopefully make interesting contacts that could help make the project feasible in the long run. After working non-stop for the past month, I will take December as a light month to let things settle. I might continue improving my animation skills. I would like to take time to read about VR and musicals.

In January I intend to start investigating VR technology (Hopefully with the help of a collaborator). This will be the time to make decisions regarding Software, possibilities of game engines vs 360 video, possible interactivity, whether the narrative is completely lineal or not, and all other questions that might come up with the actual use of the headsets. This tryout period will last until mid-March.

In mid-March, with more clarity about the medium, I will go back to the writing of the script. I will revise the selection of letters and explore the implications of the use of Spanish or English language. I will also analyze the possible introduction of visual words resembling lyric videos.

In April I intend to investigate the possibilities of different aesthetics, ideally with the assistance of an art director.

May and June will be destined for production.



AEROGRAMA  
VIA AÉREA





"This city is like heaven  
I tell you, it's an earthly paradise  
apart from the political mess

Regarding work  
I got into the advertising world  
It's good and bad  
At the same time  
All fun and glamour until you have to  
Screw people over to be successful, I do

I really changed a lot, my hair grew I lost a kilo I am two inches taller  
I'm more mature, spiritually  
And that's what I'm most proud of"





## References:

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